Psycholinguistics and the Abrahamic World — Cultural Psychology

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Psycholinguistics demonstrates that certain words carry a strong emotional charge, whether positive or negative.

Some of these words with a positive emotional charge include **just, compassionate, generous, honest, humble, charitable, merciful, and responsible**.

By contrast, adjectives such as **selfish, greedy, cruel, unjust, disloyal, corrupt, arrogant, indifferent, inhuman, intolerant, hypocritical, manipulative, oppressive, vengeful, petty, and exploitative** carry a strong negative emotional charge.

In the Abrahamic world (**Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**), words with a strong negative emotional charge acquire even greater intensity. Individuals are culturally encouraged to be fair toward others, merciful toward the vulnerable, generous toward those in need, and responsible toward the community. Thus, an expectation of moral behavior is formed that goes beyond personal benefit. However, the individualism of the twenty-first century conflicts with the moral traditions of these three religions.

In the case of **Islam**, this communal dimension assumes particular importance. The Qur'an and Islamic tradition value solidarity, responsibility toward others, charity, and the community of believers (*ummah*). *Zakat*, for example, establishes an obligation of redistribution and assistance to those in need. Therefore, a cultural interpretation of the Islamic world may place greater emphasis on the **communal, charitable, interdependent, and collective** than on the **individualistic**.

This characteristic, however, does not mean that all Muslim societies reject individualism in the same way. The tension between communal values and modern individualism becomes particularly interesting in formally secular Muslim-majority states, such as **Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kazakhstan**, where Islamic traditions coexist with secular institutions and modern forms of individualism.

The theory therefore proposes that the intensity of the negative emotional charge of certain words depends not only on their meaning, but also on the relationship between **language and morality**. The modern individual may continue to aspire to be **just, compassionate, charitable, and community-oriented**, while living in an individualistic environment.

It is precisely this distance between **what culture teaches us we should be** and **what the** capitalist socioeconomic structure **encourages us to be** that constitutes the core of this cultural psychology hypothesis: the idea that the intensity of the negative emotional charge of words in the **Abrahamic World** differs significantly from that found in other religious traditions of the world.